

The Tring Museum has "a pair from Takar (the female with the crown duller, sides of crown more greenish), one ♀? from the north coast between 136° and 137° Long., four from near Humboldt Bay, and two from the lower Ambemoh River." (*Rothsch. & Hartert.*)

[To be continued.]

XIX.—*The Breeding-grounds of the Rosy Gull.*—Part II.

By S. A. BUTURLIN.

As stated in my former paper (*suprà*, p. 131), eggs of *Rhodostethia rosea* collected on the 26th of June were much incubated, and I had hoped to procure nestlings immediately. On the 30th of June, during a heavy snow-storm which lasted all day, I visited one of the breeding-colonies near Pokhodskoe, but the nests were deserted, though from the actions of the parents I felt sure that the newly-hatched young were not far off. Not willing, however, to disturb the birds so near my house, I proceeded, on the 1st of July, to another island, some two hundred paces in width, where I found nests of *Colymbus arcticus*, *Dafila acuta*, *Harelda glacialis*, and *Calcarius lapponicus*. The Terns' eggs were in many cases already chipped, while some of those of the Rosy Gull which had been purposely left were hatched, although the paler second clutches were but slightly incubated. I saw two young birds, but could only manage to catch one, evidently two or three days old.

Soon afterwards I left Pokhodskoe, which lies nearly in the centre of the Kolymá Delta, for the north-western portion, by the "*Chúkotskaya protóka*" (Chukeche's channel) as far as the "*Cháyachya záimka*" (Gulls' farm). Here we were clear of the *Salix*- and *Alnus*-thickets, and were on the true tundra, which afforded a welcome relief to both eyes and limbs. After the delay caused by a long and heavy snow-storm I discovered two new breeding-colonies of this Gull, one on the wet grassy border of a lake about a kilometre

in diameter, the other in the middle of a somewhat larger lake, furnished with many tiny islands, spacious bogs, and shallow grassy areas. Both colonies contained from ten to twelve pairs of *Rhodostethia*, accompanied by five or six pairs of Terns, considerable numbers of *Limosa uropygialis*, *Phalaropus fulicarius*, *P. lobatus*, *Tringa maculata*, *Pavoncella pugnax*, *Harelda glacialis*, and a pair or two of *Scolopax gallinula*, *Colymbus arcticus*, *Squatarola helvetica*, *Charadrius fulvus*, and *Totanus fuscus*. *Scolopax raddei* also occurred, but not commonly, while *Anser serrirostris*, *Calcarius lapponicus*, and a few individuals of *Anser gambeli* were breeding in the immediate vicinity. I took one nest of *Somateria stelleri*, but failed to find that of *S. fischeri*, though a breeding female was killed by one of my men. In these colonies I procured seven downy young of *Rhodostethia rosea* in different stages of growth, and some young Terns, on the 6th and 7th of July.

The newly-hatched Gulls in down are some 13 or 13½ centimetres in length, but they grow quickly and measure from 18 to 20 centimetres by the time that the feathers appear on the back and flanks. Eyes dark blackish brown; legs and feet intense fleshy tinged with grey, or fleshy grey, with brownish claws; bill greyish fleshy with brownish tip. The ground-colour of the downy dress is dusty yellow, varying in tinge irrespective of growth: in some examples it is pale sulphur-yellow, in others a somewhat burnt wood-yellow, occasionally with a rusty tinge. This ground-colour is densely covered with numerous irregular and ill-defined blackish-grey markings, taking up at least as much space as the yellow ground-colour itself; they are pale and quite ill-defined on the flanks, while the middle of the breast and belly is without them and whitish—they are sharply defined and nearly black on the head, where they are narrower. The markings vary in detail in different specimens, but in all the pattern is somewhat longitudinal on the body, transverse on the nape, and wedge-shaped on the crown; this pattern is much obscured, especially on the body, as the markings are so much broken up and wavy. The

sides of the throat, the eyebrows, and the down which covers the upper mandible nearly to the nostrils, are marked with dark colour.

I may add that the Terns in down correspond pretty closely with this description, but the under-side is whiter, all the throat is dark, and the legs, feet, and bill are rose-coloured, while the bill is of course quite differently shaped.

The feathers begin to appear first on the wings, and nearly at the same time on the scapulars and tail, next on the upper part of back and on the flanks, and then on the uropygium. So far as can be seen, the new primaries are blackish, the secondaries and tail-feathers white, the tertiaries, wing-coverts, scapulars, and back-feathers brownish black with wide rusty-yellow ends, as are also upper tail-coverts. Flank-feathers and those of the uropygium white with rusty ends and blackish-grey subapical portions.

Young Rosy Gulls are very lively and clever little creatures. As soon as they see an intruder they try to creep through the grass to the water, and swim away to some distance, even if the waves are comparatively heavy. More readily still they swim to the places where tufts of *Carex* and other plants, old and dry, stand up here and there in the water, and then lie on the surface, quite still, close by one of these tufts, as if conscious that their greyish-marked dirty-yellow garb corresponds so closely with the spots and stripes of light and shadow playing on the dirty-yellow dead grass as to be practically invisible even at a distance of a few yards, especially if the wind, which is nearly always blowing here, is ruffling the surface. If you lie well hidden, after several minutes the little creature begins to swim about, returning to the ground or the wet grass whence you disturbed it, and uttering cries as it searches for its mother. When caught, it pecks your fingers, peeps and quacks, but is not much frightened.

The parents, especially the females, make a great noise around an intruder in the colony, varying their voices and notes even more than when there are eggs: "*kliáw, kliáw, kliáw; kwídoó, á-wa, á-wa, á-wa, trrrrr . . .; pióo, kwée-kwoo, á-dak,*

á-dak, á-dak; kliáw, kliáw, éea, éea; kwa-kwa-kwá, yée-kwa, kakée-a,” are heard all the time in various modulations. Near its eggs the Rosy Gull might appear somewhat foolish, but now all is changed. The female flies slowly just above the ground or wet grass, or partly swims, partly flutters, over the surface of the plant-covered water, settles down again, looking here and there, gently uttering her “*á-wa, á-wa,*” and makes you feel certain that she is trying her utmost to draw attention away from her young. But if you follow her, and then suddenly stop and look back, you will often see the little one hurrying from the place where you were just searching; while in any case you will find nothing at the place where the female appeared so busy. One female insisted upon fluttering about and sitting down so long at a certain place on an island where the colony of Rosy Gulls and Terns was situated that I carefully marked the spot and examined it, but only a Tern’s nest was there. I thought at first that this was only an accidental occurrence, but immediately afterwards the same female Rosy Gull tried to attract my attention as persistently to another spot, lying still more out of my way, and another Tern’s nest was there. The Terns understood these treacherous tactics quite well, and at the last nest the female with angry screams engaged in a short battle with the Gull.

In another case a colony of some ten or twelve pairs, where I took some five young, was deserted five or six hours later, while Rosy Gulls with young were to be found on the other side of the same lake, a kilometre distant.

I may add that Rosy Gulls killed on the 6th and 7th of July had their legs and feet less richly coloured than in spring, when they were coral- or blood-red; they were somewhat orange-red, and on the fore part of the tarsus of most specimens even horny-yellowish. The stomachs contained, as usual, only fragments of coleoptera, gnats, and other insects. All were moulting their primaries; the 9th and 10th pairs, and in some specimens the 8th also, were wanting.

Mr. Rojnowsky, a young man working with the expedition

under my direction, has just informed me that on the 13th of June he found Rosy Gulls breeding abundantly near the station "Málaya" (st. Little).

This station lies some 150 kilometres to the west of Sredne-Kolyansk (on the direct way to Verkhoyansk), on the Alazéya River, near $153\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ E.L. and $67\frac{7}{8}^{\circ}$ N.L., in taiga or forest-clad ground, and forests extend at least some 150 kilometres further down the river, as I was informed by Lamuts. So we may now state that all the lowlands of the northern half of the Kolymá district (bordered by the rivers Chaun and Alazéya, the Arctic Ocean and the Stanowoi Mountains) are inhabited by *Rhodostethia rosea*, and this area covers at least 160,000 square kilometres. In the eastern parts of the Verkhoyansk district it probably breeds up to the Indigirka River.

1905, July 10,
v. Pokhodskoe.

XX.—On some Palaearctic Birds' Eggs from Tibet*.

By H. E. DRESSER, F.Z.S. &c.

COL. WADDELL having kindly placed me in communication with Capt. R. Steen, the Medical Officer at Gyantse, Tibet, that gentleman sent to me some time ago a small collection of eggs which he had taken near the town, together with the parent birds, which he had procured in order that I might identify the eggs, particulars of which are given in the following paper. I include, in brackets, some very interesting field-notes which Capt. Steen has also forwarded. The bird-skins obtained along with the eggs are now in the Zoological Museum at Tring.

RUTICILLA HODGSONI Moore. Hodgson's Redstart.

Dresser, Man. Palaearct. B. p. 51.

Two clutches were sent, each consisting of two eggs, which were taken on the 1st of June, 1905, with two of the parent

* See 'The Ibis,' 1905, p. 525, for the last paper of this series.